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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ARRA funds to upgrade 3,800 Georgia's Pre-K classrooms released by
Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning**

ATLANTA, Ga., (October 28, 2009) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning has released approximately \$1.7 million in funds to upgrade and improve more than 3,800 classrooms that are part of Georgia's Pre-K Program. Allocated through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), Georgia's Pre-K programs that have been in existence for more than 10 years will be able to purchase materials, equipment and supplies to be used in classrooms. In addition, every continuing Georgia's Pre-K classroom will receive an additional \$400 for classroom materials.

"This funding allows us to upgrade equipment and materials in Pre-K classrooms throughout the entire state," said Bright from the Start Commissioner Holly A. Robinson. "It is important to replace outdated materials and equipment to ensure the 82,000 children participating in Georgia's Pre-K Program are receiving top-notch quality care and services."

The refresh of equipment and materials are one-time purchases. This should prove to be a substantial benefit to businesses helping to initiate economic activity across the state.

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“The good news is that children are the direct beneficiaries of this funding,” stated Mary Mazarky, Assistant Commissioner for Pre-K. “We are literally placing the benefits in their little hands, stimulating their minds and building a stronger educational foundation for them.”

Pre-K Programs have already been notified of their eligibility. For more information, call 404-656-5957 and ask to speak with Susan Adams.

For more information about ARRA funding, visit the Georgia Department of Human Services at www.dhr.georgia.gov.

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Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia’s children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia’s Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.dec.al.ga.gov.